

o.blek



o·blēk

oblique (o•blēk) *Astron.* *Oblique sphere*, the celestial or terrestrial sphere when its axis is oblique to the horizon of the place; which it is at any part of the earth's surface except the poles and the equator. *Oblique ascension, descension* see ASCENSION, 3. DESCENSION, 5. *Oblique horizon, climate*, one which is oblique to the celestial equator. 1503 *Kalender of Shepherdes* Iij, They the qwych dwellys other placys bot wnder the eqwynoxyal they haue thayr oryzon oblyk. 1669 *WORLIDGE Syst. Agric.* In such countries where the seasons and variations of weather more exactly followed the Coelestial Configurations, than in those more oblique climates. 1854 *TOMLINSON tr. Arago's Astron.* The circles described by the stars are inclined to the horizon; whence this position of the sphere derives its name of oblique.

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o•blēk

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Archie Rand, *Potato Cuts*, 1986-87



TO NORMAN, EN VOYAGE

For the first time
Norman appears in a dream
which is rather like
an appropriate epigraph
to a very long novel.
But about the dream
I remember very little.
Only that his mother
is with him,
a young cranky woman.
We are traveling together,
the three of us.
“She looks younger than you,”
I tell him.
“I could marry her,”
he answers.
“Noblesse”
is all I say to that,
and Norman understands.

And now it is Friday, August 7th.
I am awake,
Norman is going away,
his mother is in Chicago, I think,
and I will remain here,
in New York.
What did the dream mean?
Should I go back to analysis?
There is so little
one understands about life,
or dreams,
which I confuse with life,
that it is nice to be able
to cling to something
simple and real
like missing someone.

—Frank O'Hara



BERNADETTE *MAYER*

ELEVEN SONNETS

ON GIFTS FOR GRACE

I saw a great teapot
I wanted to get you this stupendous
100% cotton royal blue and black checked shirt,
There was a red and black striped one too
Then I saw these boots at a place called Chuckles
They laced up to about two inches above your ankles
All leather and in red, black or purple
It was hard to have no money today
I won't even speak about the possible flowers and kinds of lingerie
All linen and silk with not-yet-perfumed laces
Brilliant enough for any of the Graces
Full of luxury, grace notes, prosperousness and charm
But I can only praise you with this poem—
Its being is the same as the meaning of your name

HOMEOPATHIC BUSYNESS

Rigorously going from field to field
To plow up the internecine wars, how do
People find the time for their suppers
Or lost articles, there's so much blood
On the precinct steps even in the imagist snow
And I go from the moments are becoming tinier
To soon it will be bloody tomorrow's being over
Instead of any extent of thought's, love's
Or work's privileges big enough to be
The right doses. I make little money at it
But then who doesn't wake at 6 am to think
Before the grapefruits' eyes, the student cereals
Floating around in, of all things, some milk
Before the window's corridor where the snow flies up

SONNET

To perform for you, ask me why, shall I sleep?
You make love so beautifully I don't know what to do
You come and put your university hand
You've thrown yourself off the roof by now

A white dog chases a man around the park
Your school hand your rich hand your suburban hand
Cares if I come I am a woman & we women must both
Have babies & there's my mirror & there's my baby

I want one intent on your form like a room
Prepare food and eat it if the race would survive
The crystal lay like a comparison with wealth to you
I checked and you don't have your car keys

Can I believe her? So
Returned from the dead

SONNET

At 172 E. 4th Street near the bottom of NY's Avenue A
Lights make black shadows of green trees
And at noon they shout like cannibals
They shout like birds for an hour at noon
To watch the wind I will not go (outside my house)
I cant, all night the night is going on
The grand trees, school's closed, the phone bills
Rhyme in threes & each of us takes turns being
Jealous but it's I who have no stylus
I can't hear symphonies, can't hear the popular
Songs goodbye night you young men of morning
Why don't you spend the hurricane with me
Coming light your brand new flashlights a little bit
Come on, be even more generous, you boys

SONNET

Beauty of songs your absence I should not show
How artfully I love you, can you love me?
Let's be precise let's abdicate decorum
You come around you often stay you hit home

Now you are knocking, you need a tylenol;
From all that comedy what will you tell?
At least you speak, I think I'd better not;
Often men and not women have to sleep

You've come and gone—to write the perfect poem
And not ten like men or blossoms, but I am profligate
I strike the ground for ruin while you sensibly sleep
And so in this at least a poem can have an end

How could you sleep, I go to wake you up
My Lysistrata, my unannounced rhyme

SONNET

A thousand apples you might put in your theories
But you are gone from benefit to my love

You spoke not the Italian of Dante at the table
But the stingy notions of the bedded heterosexual

You cursed and swore cause I was later
To come home to you without your fucking dinner

Don't ever return su numero de telefono it is just this
I must explain I don't ever want to see you again

Empezando el 2 de noviembre 1980-something I don't love you
So stick it up your ass like she would say

I'm so mad at you I'm sure I'll take it all back tomorrow
& say then they flee from me who sometime did me seek

Meanwhile eat my existent dinner somebody and life
C'mon and show me something newer than even Dante

SONNET

My hand is like a muffin just baked in the electrocuting
toaster under the light of the smoke detector full of
American Americium to create the further tumors that make
poets underpaid in life compared to the more dismal occu-
pations like vacuum cleaning or storing thoughts in machines
or selling objects to people

Writing poems is really dumb but fuck it even we want
entertainment I saw the art of the city today smokestacks
and buildings from the hospital windows where everybody
I know is imprisoned and being demeaned on demerol or else
everything's o.k. thank god they're all fine having had
operations in there you wouldn't want to sleep with me in
exchange would you?

This is my new form of sonnet
This is the closing of it
Please don't stop loving me right this moment
Or else one of us might kill the other
Just like in the papers

SONNET

Other than what's gone on and stupid art
I've no even memory of people and their part
In bed I forget all details
The female with the male entails
For whatever that's worth who cares
He who worries or she who dares
To die practically without mentioning
Again our idiotic utopian friendships

All the city's a mass of slush and ices
You might know I don't about poetries
My hand's your hand within this rhyme
You look at me this is all fucked up time
I'm just a sparrow done up to be
An Amazon or something and he? or thee?

SONNET

It would be nice to lose one's mind my mind
I'd like to lose it I wouldn't mind at all
To be in the lunatic asylum at last
All for you and for the taxi drivers

I'll go and be asked what year what day it is
& who's the president, how come he's a resident
I could teach prosody there but nobody
Knows what it is
So send me away to anybody
Anywhere who might
Not know something I might not
Since I must vice versa live

Whaddayou mean perforce?
Army or navy or marines?

HOLDING THE THOUGHT OF LOVE

And to render harmless a bomb or the like
Of such a pouring in different directions of love
Love scattered not concentrated love talked about,
So let's not talk of love the diffuseness of which
Round our heads (that oriole's song) like on the platforms
Of the subways and at their stations is today defused
As if by the scattering of light rays in a photograph
Of the softened reflection of a truck in a bakery window.

You know I both understand what we found out and I don't
Hiking alone is too complex like a slap in the face
Of any joyous appointment even for the making of money

Abandoned to too large a crack in the unideal sphere
 of lack of summer
When it's winter, of wisdom in the astronomical arts,
 we as A & B
Separated then conjoin to see the sights of Avenue C

BIRTHDAY SONNET FOR GRACE

I've always loved (your) Grace in 14 lines, sometimes
I have to fit my love for Grace into either
An unwieldy utopia or a smaller space,
Just a poem, not a big project for changing the world
which I believe
It was the color of your hair that inspired me to try
to do in words
Since such perfection doesn't exist in isolation
Like the Hyacinth, Royal or Persian blues
That go so well with you.

Now older than we were before we were forty
And working so much in an owned world for rent money
Where there seems little time for the ancient hilarity
We digressed with once on the hypnopompic verges of the sublime
Now more engrossed in hypnagogic literal mysteries of
our age and ages I propose
To reiterate how I love you any time

JACQUES ROUBAUD

FROM *SOME THING BLACK*
SECTION I

translated from the French by
Rosmarie Waldrop

MEDITATION OF 12/5/85

There before this silence inarticulate a little
like wood some in moments like this thought they
could decipher some residue of spirit it was a
consolation for them or a double horror not for me.

Heavy blood under your skin in your hand
sunk to the fingertips I couldn't see it as human.

This image again for the thousandth time with
the same violence can't help replaying forever
my next generation of cells if there's time will
find this duplication tiresome these inner photo
prints I have no choice now.

Nothing can get to me in the dark.

I don't try to compare I don't offer hypotheses
I hang on by my nails.

I live in nearsighted times don't tell me
look at the grass over there ten years hence go
that way.

The human eye has the power to give value to beings
it makes them cost more.

You can't tell me go on talk just don't expect too
much from words they won't be thoughts.

This is the end the end where there is no truth
except for leaves fanning out into space and
its clutter.

MEDITATION ON CERTAINTY

The door pushed back the light.

I knew there was a hand. who could from now on
grant me the rest?

Having seen, having recognized death, that it didn't
just seem, but was, there was, certainly, no sense doubt-
ing it.

Having seen, having recognized death.

If somebody had said: "I don't know if this is a
hand." I could not have replied. "look more closely."
no language game could budge this certainty. your hand
hung down from the bed.

Almost warm. almost. still almost warm.

Blood coagulated at the fingertips. like dregs of
Guinness in a glass.

I couldn't see it as human. "there's blood in any
human hand." I understood this proposition very clearly.
because I was seeing it confirmed by its negative.

I didn't have to tell myself: "blood flows through
any living hand." though it's a thing no-one has ever
seen. the blood here obviously not flowing. I could not
doubt it. I had no reason to.

I WANTED TO AVERT HER EYES FOREVER

I wanted to avert her eyes forever. I wanted to be the only one on earth who had not seen. this hand might not have been there, after all: or me either, and with me the world might have disappeared. and this gift. this image of your death.

She had loved life passionately, from a distance. without feeling in, or part of, it. unhappy, she took pictures of quiet lawns and family bliss. in paradisaal ecstasy, pictures of death and its nostalgia.

For once, exact equivalence of death itself and dreamed death, death experienced, death itself-self. identical with itself-self.

Sheer abyss of love.

To fall asleep like everybody else. is what I want.

I love you to this point.

Clearly no ordinary gift. to let me have, one Friday at five a.m., the image of your death.

Not a photograph.

Death itself-self. identical with itself-self.

UNLIKENESS

The result of the investigation: a deposit of likenesses. weave of likeness. threads crossed and recrossed.

Sometimes likeness from anywhere, sometimes this likeness *here*.

Then, that you and your death shared no family trait.

It seems simple. hence: no grounds for difficulties or demands. for rude interrogation. just painful chatter. useless. superficial and trivial.

“Why can’t a dog simulate pain? is he too honest?”

I had to make friends with description.

In so many words, what did not move.

For this I recognized. though none of it derived from my experience.

You were dead. this was no lie.

DESOLATION REIGNED IN MY HEART

Where your nonexistence was so strong. it had
become a form of being.

Desolation reigned in my heart. as if talking in
whispers.

But the words not strong enough to come across.

Come across, simply. there was no what to cross.

We turn toward the world. turn toward ourselves.

We would prefer not to inhabit.

The common core of misfortune.

We were formal with each other. had been.

With you dead I can only be familiar: *tu*.

WHERE ARE YOU?

Where are you:
 who?

Under the lamp, surrounded by darkness, I spread
you out:

In two dimensions

Night falls

Under the angles of light. like dust:

Image without substance voice without body

The earth
 which rubs against you

The world
 from which nothing separates you now

Under the lamp. at night. surrounded by darkness.
against the door.

FALTERING POINT

You turn without any mass without any slow
difficulty toward the faltering point of all-out
doubt.

I did not save you from the difficult night.

You are not asleep apart from me cramped
and apart from me.

You are entirely unscathed spiritually and en-
tirely.

Unscathed but by the fistful.

And the difficult grace of clouds enters you
through the bay of roofs between the two windows.

Now it's me turning away.

In the one-eyed night under the cyclops mass of
a faltering moon.

Toward the familiar point of all-out doubt.

MEDITATION OF 21/7/85

I looked at this face. which had been mine. in the most extreme way.

Some. in moments like this. have invoked rest. or the sea of serenity. it helped them perhaps. not me.

Your right leg had come up. and spread a little. as in your photo titled *the last room*.

But this time your belly was not in the shadow. not a live point in the darkest black. not a mannequin. a dead woman.

This image again for the thousandth time. with the same insistence. can't help replaying forever. with the same keen details. I don't see them diminish.

The world will choke me before this image fades.

I do not try to remember. I do not allow myself to evoke her. no place escapes her.

Don't tell me: "her death is both the instant before and the instant after you look. you can never see it."

Don't tell me: "hush."

PULSE

Pulse of the sea

moving water water
adrift. wreckage. thyme.

Nettles. against time

I went after your scent. lay down on your ruin.

I slept next to your body.

Time turning come
full turn now. photo of a rose

Blown bare.

Wind rose
bay rosary

Let your hand stop
the pulse the time

which

comes around

again

ROBERT CREELEY

IMPROVISATIONS

for Lise Hoshour

YOU BET

Birds like
windows.

YONDER

Heaven's up
there still.

THE KIDS

Little
muffins
in a
pan.

THE CART

Oh well, it
thinks.

NEGATIVE

There's a big
hole.

SITE

Slats in
sunlight a
shadow.

PURITAN

Plant's in
place.

VIRTUES

Tree limbs'
patience.

CARS

Flat out
parking lot.

BLUE

Grey blue
sky blue.

HOLES

Sun's
shining through
you.

TEXAS REVERSE

You all
go.

ECHOES

"All god's
children got—"

OLD SONG

"Some sunny
day—"

YEAH

Amazing grace
on Willy's face!

HELP

This here
hand's
out.

SEE

Brown's another
color.

DOWN

It's all
over
the floor.

WINDOW

Up from reflective
table top's glass the
other side of it.

AROUND

The pinwheel's pink
plastic spinning
blades reversing

EGO

I can
hear I can
see

DAYTIME

It's got to be
lighter.

SPACE

Two candles
light brown—
or yellow?

WINDOW SEAT

Cat's up
on chair's edge.

EYES

All this
color's yours.

GREEN

Plant's tendrils
hanging from

but not
to—

SEASCAPE

Little boat
blue blown
by bay.

WEIGH

Rippled refractive
surface leaves
light lighter.

BIT

“De
sign
art
e[a]rly”

THE EDGE

"Your
Mem
Is Enc"

CROUP

"AL
APHIC
Y"

QUOTE

"a lot
of thought-
ful people"

GHOST

What you don't
see you
hear?

TEACHER

The big
red
apple.

CANDLE HOLDER

Small glass
cube's opaque
clarity in
window's light.

FIELDS

Meadows
more at home.

TABLE TOP

Persian's
under glass.



KENWARD ELMSLIE

PULMANETTE
KITCHEN

PULLMANETTE

Look at that beach. Atlantic. Twin liners
snub-nosed cutouts, white casinos Zambia bound.
Gooffy warble. Car alarm. Or ambulance, mini-life support
for Minnie Mouse. Ethnic potage too toxic,
Hispanic Suez. Volatile nostalgia for boohoo ooze.
Parking lot gate slides shut, E-Z electro,
condo eye styling determinism, crowd control smoothie.
Winter warmth so profligate, white bearded methuselahs
solve conundrums in organic glare. Warble's back.
Asbestos in thrift shop polkadots'll do that –
Minnie's spindly legs knuckle under, spilling cheap fruit.
Takes years for élan to fade in genes dated Praha, pre-plage.
Warning. High risk, all you smarmy hand-kissers in golf pants
tethered at the calves. Died in her sleep
watching *Miami Vice*, classic Coke drained.
We missed wake, mountainous osso buco, marrow gobs,
unregistered sub-group on permanent hold,
cots shoved together for anal sex and crack
where Art Deco gigolos, brilliantined year round,
used to cruise the flying buttress of the old Dutch fort.

KITCHEN

What with such thick flakes, can't hear myself think. Just stopped. Namby-pamby descent of a few ennervated strays as if all eon. Ragtag droop, torn yellow dodging a start up. Memory fritz. Layabouts on backyard branches no win. Al. Lit match. Gray sole. Squeeze lemon. Wipe dish. Soak pan. Al. Al Z. Al Zhivago ate a potato. In drawer, secret 4X4s.

The faucetry demo has 4 4X4s. Subtexts. Food love. It's a moviola. Sex love. Moviola. Paired up like wed. Money love. Moviola. ?eat?. TV gameshow veer, Vanna batwings on rollerskates, humps the pristine blanks. Lingo frottage. Th, tirechain on a wintry country lane, her first diphthong. Th. Th. Death, you big lummoX! Death love, moviola, 4X4.

Plot. Turandot no longer linear, what with sicko flukes, jazz nights, condom machines dotting the palais walkways. Job o'erseas, feigns Aussie accent in beige pedalpushers. Talks prices. Feminist ideograms, hers. Gusts from veil dances and flailing sleeves, shift 'em 'neath the bushes—Buddha's bellybutton signifying death love moviola drifts past imperial male organ, detumescent, signifying Al. Al. Al Zhivago's individuation forsworn for causa. A thriller. Now she's eating a winter melon on a rope bridge, breakfast in the dark, alone. I saw her do it, saw her take off bra.

Wrong person (me) in the thriller. Case of mistaken 4X4s. Hots swept into the future, last first, system at its best. Green pyramid upended, trickledown cornucopia, rarities spread about base, yams, pigs already roasted, batteries included for skin tone implants. Agents hot to trot. 4X4s.

Miscalcu . . . supernumeraries press against the vast
plateglass. All 4 4X4 moviolas at once! Apex lifts
off, green pyramid with human god eye in it, split
from base. Hovers in sky. Rays of white. Cocoon.
Stone pediment so forlorn, shorn of its best feature.

4X4 memory. Small towns linked by trams. One day
tracks end. Woods. A lovely mossy dell twas. Who
knows, gold down river, cholera, Chinese too tired.
No one figure out hands and knees how mop up mess.
One day rats ate through cement and got at the pot.
Stoned out of gourds raced amid computers. Al Z is
astraddle the cooler with Turandot. Dots Miami, wed.
One tepid Junie, nah, Dads and Sis. Rhumba bellies
ground. Hi, Mama, asleep so good in the starry sky.
To my horror, I spied a fellow in dungarees he nigh
empty the entire contents of the ketchup bottle (hat
joke) on Al's fries. Wafer on watertower, wolf moon.



CLARK COOLIDGE

PARIS . . .

Standing just outside the brass linings of Paris . . .
Beginnings that stop with jolts, like
this trip to Paris . . .
It seemed like a new life
and now it's gone.

•

And then they all just go back to their lives.
But I don't have a life. I have
this inestimable work.

•

What you don't see
is what comes through without.
The several lives . . .
contained in one the several lives . . .
But the greetings and the lastings, that's what is wanted.

•

The richness of the scene is the complete.
Avenues. You never really knew avenues
until here. They curve.

•

There are three things, and then five, and then
more. Many. Something else goes by them.
Things are settled and do not ever move.
Again.

•

Looking down from the four stories,
I see the movements, them in the street.
A corner past. The lives that meet,
that go past and do not. Skirts.
No breeze. Morning shine on the grey
curved tops. Pigeons and bells.

•

I wanted to write about Paris, but
it was a life I had left. A music
I was not to hear. The memory is in
the rhythm of the light. A rhythm never
singular. A spreading I cannot approach
and knock.

•

Time is of groups. Friends. New ones.
We go to a place together. We are never
left. Big roaring gangs in cafes with
the midst of other roaring gangs.
Godard films it all as if combined,

mirrored into a single side angle.
It's impossible to recall the speech
of the drinking.

•

Do you want to have these cigarettes?
Who has them now?

•

Bright avenue, I worship you. I have
brought this far into the extended world.
A chain of command. It has a life
which is out, onto the streets. No division
so spoken as a wish. I walk in the place.
I have walked there. I see it all.
I no longer quite see it. I have been.
I am one.

•

The longer you think, the fuller you stop.
The wisher you want to be you. I sit by you.
We walk by. The windows throw gold.
The sun is in team. Remarks, as if chosen,
unchosen. The three more you will meet.
We. Going together. Witnessed en masse.
A small case in a museum contains all
his roses.

•

They were liars and embraced. They told the
wanted tales. Night always and failure and
the things. The things waiting to be remembered
undone. A facade. The movie was playing.
Another facade. The black suits arriving
in the buses in the night.

•

Complementary and shivered. The books
of avail in the white store. Mallarme.
And the exiles. A bird landing, then another one.
The information at the same times of night.
Groups around, listening, commenting. More
drinks and only then more work.

•

She lived near the spray of waters.
The long boulevard of quells. The grand
boulevard of closeness having doubts. A
handsome and useless gate. He ate often in
this restaurant. The one of the sea-green light
and women transparent to the ceiling.

•

Where we hid and talked and made light.
Made time. The place of memory is the one
unknown before. I take your cigarette

and thank you. I thank the world
in small for its roll.

•

It's short, Paris. And large, function.
The pencil will reach every corner.
Every opal glass grape halfway to the ceiling.
When we pigged out on pig, and observed the
level voice of the petit bourgeois increase
with the meal. So much warm light caught
we did not notice the destruction outside
anymore.

•

A calming careful reciting of menus.

•

Everyone must know. Everyone must stay,
but they go. Everyone's lives, street by street.
Does he live over the sign that says . . . ?
When it turns on a phrase. Where it lives
by the shine of the committed phone.

•

A certain weightless facet, Paris.

•

In the quick window (we do not go in)
the huge poster of Le Mepris. And it is all
big Bardot in Yellow. And besides it's
normal.

•

Life in its endless crystallization going in.

•

Will you have more of the vodka
of an amber Russian basement
chilled in carafe preceding
the reading and with buffalo grass?

•

Then the night again, and restaurants, and
tobacco afloat of a zincish hue.
How the conversation was vast, and the light
of your eyes an inroad beyond all
perimeters of the former life.

•

How you dream in Paris the dream that
makes up your day.

•

Fast embracing eyes and talking the words out.

•

You go through all of it. It might have been
you going through it. Long ago on the walls
of last week. And the tiniest crack or
abrade there was drawn by someone.

•

You walked out ahead of me fast. But
I was faster and I caught the door.
It was the car and we were going somewhere, to
be taken somewhere again. Where there
would be no music. The parties had no music.
Poets. Food. Drinks. Smokes. Talk in bunches.
The bland dark sheets of her paintings on the
walls were the walls. Not so good, someone said.
Sometimes laughter and tales told again of the
older poetry times. A black cat passes through.
We are in his apartment, it is a place of halls
and it is late. We go out through the unlit
garbage can passage, the street out there.
But the thought comes that there is no
return to any of this.

•

We love each other and have never spoken.

•

You think you know what it is?
Green grass. White cobbles. Waiting.
I cannot write. My hand grows weak.
I continue. Not cobbles. Gravel.
At the side of the museum at the appointed
time but they do not come. My hand
grows wavy. Wary? Don't forget to dot
the importance of a mistake. How I came
to be here. There. After the appropriate
fifteen minutes I went away. But I
had seen.

•

The pictures were all quite visible, though
none intensely lit. The sensation that
true paint should glow from beneath
once given just enough light for a start.
What of those Monets certainly painted
outdoors in full sun? They had soaked up so much
light that day that surely they were still giving it
back? Perhaps I should have waited
a bit longer for them to come?

•

Why am I writing this? For no reason
in the world. This kind of writing is a sort
of waiting. For the true writing to come,
the words that will have soaked up

enough . . . what? Late, and I have
not even one fire to put out. The sentences
all on strips of paper like hat bands and spin.

•

To be given the gleam of a new life
and then be hurled away from the crack.
Abysmal. Melville (Ishmael) had accepted
the exile's life of writer. He stood
with his back to the city's edge and faced the
water of that first page. What we (I)
want is formless. A single pronoun is
never enough. The lights come on in the life
and there are always many. As if a
phantom "too" accompanied each sentence.
Have I not copied myself sufficiently?
Standing below the granite sheer and watching
its darkest blue edge. My pen will
never reach.

•

Once you realize that each word has a life
of sizeless shifts of meaning . . .

•

The leaves have grown again to cover
the times to see. Even in the dark
the lights will not show.

•

My word "and" in my quick hand
has become a drawing of no meaning.
Or little. Or there is still something I
could invent to fit it. I woke up
with it once beneath my hand.

•

I keep trying to sketch the person, myself.
There is still sometimes a resonance in
the house of the phone bell we no longer have.
That invention is larger than we thought.
And sometimes I think I have more
words than are possible.

•

Drop it, whatever thing you had hoped to
cling to. Drop it down your life.

•

A fine clutter there. Sterling inventions
in careless treatment. A hole in a noun.
A mouse on fire. The whole hoop of
intention revealing flaws in the exterior
as it spins. Away down the sky before
dawn the roaring plane has become an
empty bottle.

•

The handsome and useless gate of Andre Breton.

•

I see the monuments.

I near the rest of my life.

I take what's left of Picasso's hand.

CHRIS TYSH

FROM *COAT OF ARMS*

Some events have no observable contours, twice the neck to the small extent that inanimate objects are found lacking there is some feeling, lighted torches and footing cavalierly depicted in the absence of mirror we exhibit ancient manners already subject to dispersion, easy pin traffic. One could've said bastard language dragged across the loft, belly method a schoolgirl in uniform falls straight back to the house genre of illusion, that *mahlerische Figur* rampant in this way over everything in which she is contained, a series of photographs rather than torrential mechanism of affection, we know the gallant fictions at the end of the eighteenth century, always broad understandings structured like hands on the side of raiment, grassy garters tied to continental leisure, those with last trace of delirium he lays flat in the corridor, counting. What they see talking to each other is erased at thigh, pearls on spikes across the screen: band of hooks, phantasmatic lashes. Few commission such views.

unless of course it is supposed they were sneaking away from behind the classical camera lucida, its over-arching garden formulas like some preposterous confession on a death-bed chaperoning their desire, mirror and latch, to bolt out of sequence, disremember the blushing accents upon a chief; the weeping image both precedes and survives all versions, need not be inconvenient reference to fever, tiresome furniture in the child's mouth, rather some pneumatic envoi to crowd the escutcheon with crated letters, she can become *air, this hollow* if her father dies in a state of lexical suspension which leaves the communiqué intact while a curtain rises on the Officers of the Realm speaking without detours nor much fear of interruption about simple devices they paint in vivid colors, notwithstanding the syntax of the new sanctions (these should be repealed), the first maintains upon an interminable sentence, the recollection of her mother, all normal positions for a brisure put into traffic at once

n'a pas de direction, à peine une sorte de terreur vers la mer, cette possibilité vêtue de phrases clandestines désigne une attente, un lieu-dit comme une corniche ou femme au sommeil pauvre, bouche ivre il lui arrive de saisir une violence, envie d'abriter à elle seule les formes interdites d'un discours qui la sépare des autres. L'éventail est largement ouvert, SLASHING BETWEEN AS MANY PROPOSITIONS OR. ON A PLAIN BEND HER HAIR. Minuit panache d'un récit obscène, COLLARED & LEASHED on y promène celle qui compose l'objet caché de notre angoisse. Ses longues jambes nues, légèrement pliées, elle (persiennes, l'appartement de X, magistrale guêpière-fiction) tarde, fait durer le texte qui s'ouvre à cet endroit à la blancheur mécanique du non-dit.

Napa deer wreck scion, open-sorted terror
Vermeer settee, vested possibility of clandestine phrases
designs a tent, only did come cornice or femme
o' some poor butch ivy Louis, are riveted.
Say sire a violence, envied arbiter ails soul
lest forms interdict, deign a discourse-key, less
pared otters. Leviathan east, largely meant oeuvre,
SLASHING BETWEEN AS MANY PROPOSITIONS OR. ON A PLAIN
BEND HER HAIR. Minute pan ash duns, recites obscene
COLLARED & LEASHED any pro men sell key, compose,
lob jet, cashed neuter angst. Say long jambs knew,
ledger mint pliés, ale (persian, X's apartment, magistral
Gay-Pierre fiction) tardy fête during the text's key
over a set android, all blanch hour, mechanic dew, none dit.

armorial bar cockatrice diaper ermine
fretty grant heiress inverted jessant-de-lis
knot latticed mantling nebuly or pale
quarterly roundel sable tincture urchin
vambraced women yale zodiac

achievement bend cock delta expanded
feather graft hand impaling jambe
key lodged marshalling night-ape ondoyant
parted queen's coat reversed sun-in-his-splendor
trussing unicorn's head vair wreath of laurel

that name?
wrecks everything, mother made it up under interrogation
her repertoire?
basic greek, furnish the story with incendiary emotions,
elevate X to Y
the suitcases?
books. The widow kept money in *PALE FIRE*
hysteric?
by all accounts. This image is accomodated in a sentence:
"Her pain is demonstrative, like a rose slipped and leaved."
in the thread?
the prolonged maintenance of sexual fantasies, family
jewels deserving her tenderest ministration
could it be . . . ?
no sooner had she grasped the parts than she was pressing
further into the whole foreign substance with a striking
lack of modesty
and then?
turning the pages the arrival of war: fragment, deconstruction
limit her *violon d'Ingres*, lighter sketches rub out

more plausible than others advanced in the past
the manifest contents of a slip. their very
slimness presupposes an ordinary fabric, most
likely a blend of cotton-wool and abusive duties.
perhaps this was an odd excuse, dyed blood-red
until recently but kept nonetheless for what it
concealed in italic readiness of the more vintage
stuff, a leash so made there are strangers
who pass by. (between cup and lip). some
guarded use of anteriority may attend the masked
ball in full swing, roll down its hair so to speak,
against evenly troubled nurseries. almost like
a proper name the material goes public overnight
with its tendentious identity, counterfeit panels
tilting on the way to the bedroom. the idea of
including portrait sleeves, veils, bands of fur
only exaggerates the doctrinal fainting of women,
how they slip and slide across the corridor
toward the invisible scalloped edges of perversion.
shades of empire can be detected in coffee, famous
gaffe.

PAUL METCALF

FROM *MARIN HEADLANDS: INCIDENTS OF CHANGE*

"March 5, 1853, a sunny Saturday, found the steamer *Tennessee*, a big three-masted sidewheel steamship, approaching the end of a 21-day journey from Panama. She was Pacific Mail's proudest, 1350 tons, and had been shuttling between Gate and Isthmus for almost three years. Her 551 passengers were excited, for the gate and the port of gold were only 100 miles away."

The *S. S. Tennessee* had been purchased by the Pacific Mail Steamship Company in 1849, to add to their fleet of steamers running a shuttle service between the Isthmus of Panama and San Francisco, carrying in gold-seekers, and bringing out gold.

There are accounts of one of her earlier voyages—1850:

"*Tennessee* was so crowded on her first voyage to San Francisco that twenty steerage passengers were unable to obtain berths. These unfortunates slept on deck; 'the purser has meted out an old mainsail for them . . . ' "

" . . . it is curious to walk over the deck at night; men are lying about in every place large enough to hold them; hammocks are swung across the vessel and fastened to every stanchion and rope . . . "

Food, however, at least for the cabin passengers, was excellent:

"Turkey, Goose, Duck, Beef, Pork, Lamb & Kid all fresh, Beef, Ham, Pork & Fish salted, Raisins, Prunes, Almonds, Filberts, Preserves, Tea, Coffee, Loaf Sugar, Pies, Puddings, Cakes, Cheese, Butter, Sardines, Green Peas, Green Corn, Green Beans, Pickles, Oranges, Bananas, Hot

Cakes, Honey, Jams, Buckwheats, Eggs, Omelets, &c, &c."

"Meals in steerage were of lesser quality . . . Each passenger approached the bar with tin pot and pan in hand and was served salt beef, duff (a boiled pudding made from suet, flour, and dried fruit), coffee or soup. He then 'plants himself down where he can to eat it.' "

"Among the passengers were 'twelve or fourteen women of bad character' and 'a little knot of gamblers, with their women. . . . Every night the gamblers opened a faro bank in their cabin . . . ' "

At the same time: "With the large number of clergy on board, regular religious services offered an alternative . . . "

The voyage in 1853 did not begin auspiciously:

"In transferring the passengers on board,—all in such a tremendous rush and hurry, you know, to get that crowd on in a few hours,—one or two fell into the water; and the chief mate, Dowling,—Richard Dowling,—jumped straight over and after them. It was a most courageous thing to do, under the circumstances, for that bay is full of sharks, and it was only a chance that he got the passengers out and got back alive."

There was a stop at Acapulco, but few of the passengers went ashore, "for fear of the Isthmus fever."

There was already illness on board, "brought on by passengers who had caught yellow fever while waiting for the ship in Panama. As with other voyages, the fever began to take a toll. Dealing with the fever and the resultant deaths had never become commonplace with the ship's surgeon, Dr. Alex McNaughton. Having successfully quelled outbreaks of the fever on board *Tennessee* in the past, McNaughton had eventually fallen into despair with each repetition of sickness and death. In January of 1853, McNaughton, facing yet another outbreak on board, and 'losing his first cases, and seeing the terror spread around him, soon became demoralized, and losing sleep, resorted to stimulants, and finally arrived at such a condition that his brother officers felt it necessary to put him in irons. He was, in fact, a maniac.' Through the efforts of several passengers, the spread of the disease was halted and many of the stricken recovered. Dr. McNaughton also apparently recovered, for the next

month he was back on board the *Tennessee* for her last voyage. Once again, though, the fever struck, and McNaughton snapped. Halfway through the voyage to San Francisco he slit his throat. Fortunately, he was discovered and survived . . . ”

On the final night of *Tennessee's* final voyage, fog closed in, and in the morning it was still thick. “Captain Mellus, confident of his position, began to slowly work the ship toward the Golden Gate. Meanwhile, some of the passengers, confident of a delay, made their way below deck to start on breakfast. The strong current of the gate caught the ship, and unknown to the Captain, slowly began to swing the *Tennessee* past the harbor entrance and along the rocky shoreline of the Marin County coast. The first inkling of disaster came a little after nine o'clock, when a steerage passenger who had been standing at the bow ran towards the wheelhouse, shouting that he could see breakers ahead. By this time Mellus could hear the crashing waves, and as the fog suddenly lifted, the narrow confines of a sand beach could be seen; behind the ship, and surrounding the *Tennessee*, were the jagged spires of bare rock. At that moment, the ship struck.”

“We sat down . . . and called for something to eat, when there came an awful crash of the steamer. Everybody knew instantly that we'd struck. Everything went off the table in a heap . . . ”

“She struck kind of sideling, grazed on the reef, and slid off. We saw the cliff ahead, tried to back off, and the surf threw the stern around, so that a rock, which the captain had taken for Mile Rock, was right at our stern, and prevented us from backing. Then the surf kept driving her in, and she struck nearly broadside on, and the swell carried her over till she stuck on the reef, and there she was fixed . . . ”

“ . . . each wave pounded her closer to the shore and deeper into the sand. The decks were filled with milling passengers, many of whom were crying and screaming. Some began to pray as the rocking of the ship began incessantly tolling the ship's bell. ‘The women took it for the toll of doom’ ”

"It was a providential landing in a place of bold bluffs and smashing waves." (About two miles north of Point Bonita.) "Indian Cove, they called it up to that time,—and the cove was so narrow that fifty feet from the stern, or fifty feet from the ship's nose, would have brought us on the cliffs . . . "

Today, it is Tennessee Cove, with Tennessee Beach, Tennessee Point, and Tennessee Valley.

"Well, this same chiefmate Dowling, that jumped overboard at Panama Bay, watched his chance, and took a small line,—fastened about his body,—and jumped overboard on one of the high seas. He was carried ashore and thrown upon the rocks, and happened by good luck to be able to get hold of something and hang on when the undertow went back, and then managed to scramble up out of reach of the water. So then they sent a larger line over, and then a cable hawser, from the wheelhouse, and three or four other men went over."

Tom Gihon, the express messenger, "got the steward to help him, and they got a quarter-boat down, on their own responsibility, and he found he could get the ladies ashore, so a few of the passengers that hadn't anything to do turned in and helped him, and finally he got them all safe to the beach. It took half the day,—O, 'twas a tremendous job. He had to threaten to kill the men if they didn't keep back,—they would have rushed right over the women and children and piled into the boat . . . "

Searching the ship for any strays, he found a Miss Sanford in her cabin.

" 'Hurry up!' "

" 'Why, what's the matter?' says she."

"He said, 'The vessels ashore!' "

"She said, 'I *thought* it was queer that the steamer went bumping that way through the Gate.' "

"She was getting everything together, just as methodical as a Yankee schoolmarm would, you know."

"All this time the ship's bell kept tolling a terrible toll . . . Of course there was no life-saving station then, and almost no settlements in Marin County . . . "

"The officers had given up trying to save the ship and they had to hurry before the cabins filled with water, to get the bedding out of the berths. They had them take that and all the sails, and get it all ashore and take hold and make tents for the people."

"It was foggy, cold weather, and hundreds of people crowded on the little beach . . . "

The surgeon, who had gone crazy and slit his throat, was brought ashore, and a place was made for him.

" . . . a great many of the steerage passengers got guides from those who had been in the country before, and started off across the mountains to walk to Sausalito." When word of the wreck reached the Sausalito people, "Old Captain Richardson was the first one to come,—the same man after whom Richardson Bay was named. His house was at Sausalito, and he was a regular old-timer; had his ranch there in Mexican times."

"As the workers frantically stripped the steamer it began to go to pieces in the surf." " . . . her back broken, butt ends started and bottom probably bilged . . . " "Around noon on March 8, the hull split, and 'all that heavy machinery went right down through the bottom' as the engine tore free of its timber mounts and broke apart."

Of the 551 passengers on board, and all the officers and crew, not a single life was lost.

Captain Mellus was blamed for the wreck, "for he ought not to have tried to make the Gate in that fog without more care. It appeared that the *Sierra Nevada* could be seen going in ahead of us, and we had followed her: Mellus didn't want the opposition boat to go in ahead and report that we were outside. Then the fog came down . . . "

Today, 135 years later, a severe storm will occasionally expose a fragment—a pulley block, or some such—of the *Tennessee*.

Some thirty miles to the west—outliers and guardians of the Headlands—stand the Farallons: “small rocky islands in the sea.”

The earliest Russians on the northwest coast were the *promyshleniks*—Kamchatkan and Siberian fur-hunting privateers. Enslaving the native Aleuts, they occupied the Farallons, built stone huts, set up a base for hunt-ing seals and the sea otter, which they called *bobri morski*—sea beaver: a shy creature, with eyes “full, black and piercing.” Armed with bone-tipped spears, the Aleuts put to sea in their bidarkas, water-proof craft, with the native’s outer garment fastened to the craft’s sealskin covering—so that native and bidarka, paddling through turbulent waters, appeared as one sea creature. (The Aleut referred to the otter as “my brother”—but, under Russian domination, he seemed to have no compunction against fratricide). Seated in his bidarka, he waited for hours, perhaps days, for his prey.

There were neither wood nor water on the Farallons, and five or six times a year the Russians would pay the islands a visit to collect skins and refresh supplies. Little wood was needed, though, as cooking was done mostly with oil-soaked bones. For twenty years the hunt continued—until seals and sea otter were virtually exterminated.

Later—between 1850 and 1856—the Faralone Egg Company of San Francisco brought into the city, from the Farallons, between three and four million eggs—eggs of several birds, among them the *Foolish Guillemot*.

People who have lived on the islands say that during storms one can hear a kind of moaning noise against the breaking waves. And in the very worst storms, the Farallons are said to shake . . .

In the summer of 1597, Sir Francis Drake, coasting northward in a vain search for a northwest passage, stood off the Golden Gate, by the Farallons—and the fog was in. His chaplain, Francis Fletcher, made notes:

“Neither could we at any time, in whole fourteene days together, find

the aire so clear as to be able to take the height of sunne or starre." And: "We could very well have been contented to have kept about us still our winter clothes."

Fletcher hated the fog, found it "vile, thicke, and impenetrable."
He even claimed that "it stank."

According to aboriginal tradition, San Francisco Bay had once been a valley, fertile and beautiful, broken by hills and watered by two rivers.

Or it was an oak grove, with a single river flowing through.

In native legend, the name for Golden Gate was *Yulupa*: Sunset Strait.

"Ancestors of the Miwoks and of all the Native Americans . . . were migrating Siberian hunters."

where the sun sleeps. our fathers came thence.

"These early wanderers crossed to Alaska from Asia . . ."

the earth opened in the west, where its mouth is

" . . . when there was a land bridge across the present Bering Straits."
it would be good to live on the other side

The first peoples to enter what is now California, from the north, arrived some 10,000 years ago. The Miwok, of the Penutian family, were among the several tribes that followed. They settled the Marin area perhaps 5,000 years ago. The Penutians have been linked by some linguists with the Maya.

(The Costanoans, settling the San Francisco peninsula, are known to have had boats that carried them to the Marin shore. According to one theory—"that cannot yet be proven"—they may have occupied some portion of the shore, at least for a time.)

In Miwok legend, there was a mysterious land, far to the north: "*wali-kapa* was a sort of cliff or mountain. Beyond it the young ducks live. They say that on the other side the sky comes way down. It is to the north; it is not reached by a passage that is closed."

Originally, there was neither creation nor creator, although Coyote was a dominant figure. His land lay far to the west, beyond the ocean. He appeared first on the primeval water, followed by his grandson, Chicken hawk, the latter in the form of a feather floating on the water.

When Coyote appeared, the land was covered with water. Coyote shook his *walik*—something like a blanket—to the south, east, north and west. The water dried and the land appeared.

Coyote tried to regulate the tides, but he made them so low that most of the fish died. Later, he corrected the error, and arranged the tides as they are today.

Coyote was “mean” and “never helped people; he worked by himself.” “Crab woman did not like him because when he opened his mouth, it had too strong, too bad a smell.”

“In the early days, people didn’t die. But Coyote wanted to hear people crying after somebody had died. He liked to listen to the noise. I don’t remember who was the first to die.”

Eventually Coyote returned west, across the ocean, “and built a house over there where the sun sets. He worked four days and could not stop. The top of his house could be seen from the hills there. Coyote didn’t like that. He wanted to make smoke. Sometimes he smoked tobacco. He wanted fog or smoke to cover the ‘shine’ of his house. One day, early in the morning, he smoked. The smoke became fog. He filled his pipe four times and smoked. Then he stopped. He made the fog stay, and even when the wind blows, his house is still covered.”

When people die, they go to the west, to be with Coyote. “The dead go toward Point Reyes and go down there. They say there is a little chunk of wood there, which they use to make a fire. A piece of rock about two feet long is at the spot where they jump into the ocean and then follow a road back of the breakers.”

With a permanent settlement near present-day Sausalito, the Coast Miwok hunted and fished the Headlands. But the staple of their diet

was acorns—from the tan oak, black oak and blue oak. “Acorns were gathered in the fall, sometimes with the aid of knocking sticks and often off the ground after the first strong winds of the late fall and early winter.” Probably, too, they were found after the grasses were burned.

The acorns were ground to a fine flour, then cleansed of tannic acid through water leaching. “Acorn flour was used to make soups, thick porridges, and, among some groups, even bread. To make mush, acorn flour and water were placed in a water-tight basket in which fire-heated rocks were stirred until the mixture was cooked. Acorn breads were often baked in above-ground or underground ovens. The importance of acorns is signified by the number of foods to which the Indians referred as condiments to acorn dishes. Salmon, deer, fresh berries, dried kelp, a host of herbs and fresh greens . . . ”

Hunting and fishing on the Headlands were seasonal. “Some animal foods, such as deer and crab, were available all year. Winter and early spring were times of shortage, when stored dried acorns and seeds, plus kelp . . . were the mainstay. Nevertheless, there were salmon runs; mudhens were available, and in late winter, geese. In spring, small fish stranded at low water in pools on the rocks were collected, and another kelp . . . was eaten . . . ”

“Marine foods were important. Sea mammals were not eaten, but there was heavy reliance on fish. Surf fish were caught in a circular dip net; bay fish, in a seine strung between two tule balsas. Only for bullhead was a line with a gorge used. Steelhead and salmon were taken during the winter runs . . . Eels were netted or were poisoned . . . Of shellfish, only mussels and several kinds of clams were important as food.”

One elderly informant stated that “bear was scarce; deer not plentiful, but more common than bear; rabbit more prevalent than either; but they ‘ate more clams than rabbits.’ Bear, elk and deer were the large game animals; rabbit, cottontail, wood rats, gophers, and squirrels, the small ones. Land birds were trapped or netted, some for food, some for the feathers. Aquatic birds were varied and plentiful.”

Eagles, buzzards, ravens, owls and frogs were considered sacred, and were not hunted.

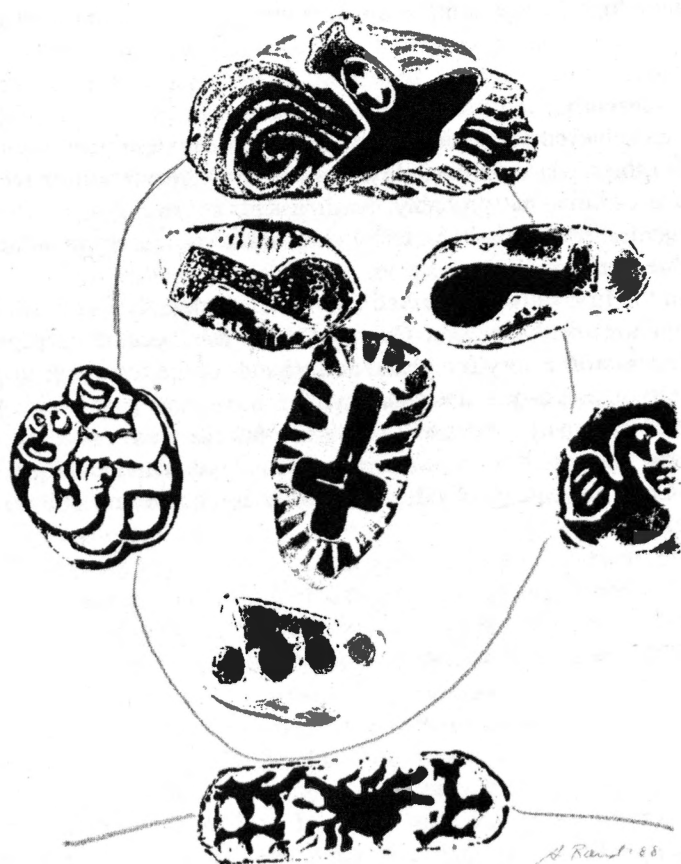
“Sexual abstinence was required several days prior to fishing or hunting, and these activities were suspended during the wife’s menstrual period and following birth of a child. A deer hunter lived on acorn mush and pinole for two days prior to the hunt and ate no saltwater food except kelp.”

The archaeology indicates that, over a period of unnumbered centuries, “they had achieved something quite rare in human history: a way of life that gave them peace and stability, not just for a generation or two, not just for a century, but probably for thousands of years.”

The goal of each successive tribal chief was to not lose ground to “stay where we are.”

When the first Europeans asked them their names, they said *Michako*, meaning, *we are the people*. Over the years this became corrupted to *Miwok*. And over a very few years, at the hands of the restless Europeans and their diseases—the missionaries, the land- and gold-seekers, the epidemics of malaria and small pox—the Miwoks were destroyed.

“By the early 1930s, there were perhaps three individuals predominantly Coast Miwok in blood . . . Effectively people and culture have disappeared.



RAY RAGOSTA

FROM *THE VARIETIES OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE*

15.

Least agitation of body,

and the weather seems
all-whispering with peace.

The vacillating account
of circumstance

accounted for
by the high-strung
organism,

and what moves over it—

first perfume of day

or irruption,

the all-leveling character
of well-placed points
in discord

—gestures assembling
and disassembling,

the strangeness
of distance.

16.

Incredible intimations
intrude upon
the landscape,

as surveyed.

Presence (we suspect,
bodies) moving
over unchangeable
realms of space,

but the bodies change,
gradually take
new forms

until, announced with a burst,
the *Dies irae*
creates in us
grisly, blood-freezing,
heart-palsying sensations

—dread and submission,

countered by
attraction to weird science,
which conceives demons
trapped in the sword-hilt,

though soon the plan
goes awry
as the weapon in hand
dances contrawise;
and the innate,
inexplicable microbe of failure
spreads poison
through all creation.

Our parade of creatures
grows ever maddening,

the forms they take
cool into hard geometries
of piercing cries,

set against silence
that breeds
the worst kind of melancholy,

for what had been dreamed
were beings of diaphanous nature,
struggling for breath,

not flesh
breaking into revolt.

17.

In the ghastly vestibule
shines a strange light,
borne of strange causes—

gaslight fixtures
decades ago
torn from the walls

leave traces,

partial outlines
of ornaments

now lit
by dead hands.

In this place of beginnings,
intention has run amuck

haunted by
passive circumstance,

an idea in the architecture
decaying.

18.

Wings torn
and tearing

become like wind—

are wind.

Unnatural psychic complex
spinning its wheels,

like transport
uncommunicated.

The small thing,
round and nameless,
in the hand,

gives its mute lesson
(commentary acquired);

or a man tussles
with his thoughts
of fiery rain,

some sort of apocalypse

only he
lives with,

with his breath
stuttering.

19.

The final questions
have driven us
to distraction,
have opened pathways

whose criss-crossings weave
a network of foul negation,

the pivotal damning emphasis
dwarfing passions
at the chill periphery
of things.

We emerge from
the cloud of alternatives

—eternal variations
chattering *in tongues*
at us

(better oblivious
to it)

though carnal sense ignored
offends the disciples

—the natural pagans.

So we set sights
at the peaks
of the 'Delectable Mountains.'

In ritual form
of expiation
our thoughts
become word-objects
inscribed on stone
and are smashed—

some vestige of magic
that drives
passional nature

to speculative melancholy,
and law of fatigue.

It keeps us going,
this enormous effect

—quantitative mixture
of mood,

moving us outward,
closer to the material
at hand.

It's green stuff,
which drips in globs
onto the landscape,
jars memory,
and paints a new idyll
where 'creatures and flowers
breathe indolently,'

awaiting long winter.

ROBERT KELLY

THE DEFILEMENTS

The differential
of a small heart.
Pickup, pleasant
interlude then from dawn
of leaving house till noon
worry about her, herpes.
In afternoon forget. Home
dread lesion. Spartan
character of sexuality:
we die for this,
pleasure-fox that gnaws the
belly zone, crotch wolf,
this angry worm.

2.

Give the girl a break, she
was with you as you with her,
one car among many, shiny,
not old not new.

Her skirt the color of my fender
she too soon was out of
then what do I do? The lesion
is a lesson in not listening,
a lessening of my liaison with
superior powers as expressed
undismally in the wild
turbulence inside
woods of me think animal.

3.

Socrates had it, the difference,
the distributor, he listened
but whether he always we don't
know, always only the dissuader.
Don't. Whereas I in Kensington
stood again and again, my foot (right)
raised to the polished brass hydrant
tying my shoelace in the rain,
innocent rapture of travellers!
fish smothered in shortening of barnyard
origin crisp even on Rainday
evening, fried plaice with adequate tea.

4.

As opposed to ventry.
Whenever she walks by a book
falls off the shelf in my Museum
my dome fills with weird light,
scholars frig under long tables
or flee from the ev'r augmenting Musick.
Glass mummy cases crack,
Assyrian bull gods ramp up the halls,
spit-cocked Silenes and Satyrs rove
until this successful Greek Revival building
blows off my head like a paper billycock hat
—bared-haired to my enemies I step
wordfully to beseech her.

5.

Come ride with me to my leprosy bed,
open your island, I'll be sine wave
and you give head, then you
be Egypt and I your old Red Sea
parting you, drying and pouring
and drowning legions of your other lovers,
all those incontinent pharaohs—
turn on the radio, rub your rump
on the door of my vehicle. Polish what I am.
This is nothing but rock video, dance
for electrons in a vacuum,
nobody home in all that busy street,
a centurion checking his spare change.

6.

Rove back, or Rome ("crossback")
a warrior towards. All our sex
means nothing. All our politics
is just sick sex, what old men do
to rue their juniper. Live-Oak!
Give us Americans the chrism of peace
neither soy nor sassafras, the old
entitlements are grey as Appomattox.
Something lost and something won,
the same old wheel boils on fornever.
Johnnycakes at dawn and in
the frozen midnight void you stumble
over the slopjar half-hidden by the bed.

7.

I touch and you
give me the disease called
Another Person's Touch. This
is a technical defilement.
Penalty Box. Hospital this time,
the pornographic novel comes to life
just as the man dies, his fingers
dissolve touching her white
dissolving skin. The problem
is continuous, recurs ("is
reborn") in every interval.
The dance, it has been called, the dirt.

8.

The dance is our waste paper.
Theodora risen from the mosaicked wall,
her sloe eyes inveigle my slow thong.
Rapt, I argue with the light:
“Show more, how show me,
her show more, sheer,
how sheer in sight!”
She steps towards me, the screen
is just another kind of skin.
I am nothing but the laws you code,
a thing that stands on corners
waiting for the world to come along.



Al. Sand 1966

FANNY HOWE

PERFECTION AND DERANGEMENT

Dirt road, down a slope. In spring the trees are spackled with white blossoms, some flecks of pink. The branches look like long bones; the white has returned to them in the form of snow. Pinker berries dot the thinnest branches and thorns, and a spray of same lies across the rotted porch. If you look through the boarded-up windows you will see a contraption for restraining someone too sad to move.

Where can I rest? Satellites circle this snow-covered flatland. Orchards are bare by the reservoir, the green benches bent from cold. Under the ice I can see a leaf, a can, a tire, a fish, something from outer space. Then the water hardens like gelatin, swollen into lumps where old leaves are inlaid. An interior, destroyed by mismanagement.

Suffering is how the world informs the human mind that it is there. Suffering proves to the mind that it is exposed to alien substance, like it or not. If you can't act even while you suffer, you can only suffer and sink. Nonetheless a person has a right to protest and complain and to yearn bitterly for release.

May for one rejects any absolute dualism. She has it that past, present and future exist simultaneously. All time is the ONE's creation. Then police from Rhode Island call and want to know her status. They say they found her walking along the highway in shirtsleeves with no money, on her way to New York. They have brought her to the Cranston Medical Center and she can be picked up there.

Women are like roaches, they survive so much. They seem to grow tougher with each succeeding generation. I think the evolution of material things came before the entrance of women onto this earth, but they followed almost immediately. The first one was last seen through a hole in the clouds, going down through the top. A kind of intergalactic storm reviewer, she jumped directly for the heart and support.

Where are you that you don't invite me in, turning your hand out and over? Do you know which room I inhabit, the bed among beds and under stone joinings? That none of these belong to me?

To confabulate is to conceal your mental retardation. To confabulate is to be a fool filling in the gaps in your memory with detailed accounts of false events.

What do you dream about in the facility? Will you ever wake up to the facts and this way give up HOPE?

Your hands, like ten virtues, can only do so much. I have noticed, since coming here, that each person in this world is chasing his or her self at all times. Somepeople just move slower getting from the past person to the present or first one. Those who wail they want to go home are referring to a community where justice prevails and they get their mail. Though they are certainly sociopathic, they're not in prison, are they? They were never violent, but more likely terrified. Look into their oceanized eyes.

Our primordial metaphysical and religious experience begins in terror. This produces a modesty whose secret is only revealed through certain sacraments and only to those participating in them. This transaction is called THE DISCIPLINE OF THE SECRET.

I had just figured out how to live correctly when I realized it was too late, I had taken too long figuring it out.

Before on-rushing time I experience total helplessness. Like the words, “You shall see my back but my face shall not be seen,” the loneliness in a human face belongs to the ONE.

Likewise for every one fact there’s a second one to counter it. If therefore I knew all the facts, I would be paralysed—on wheels again at last.

The hidden countenance is one countenance worth contemplating. There a felicitous light swells into substance which sees as you see and breathes as you breathe; it even kisses where you kiss. Whisper your prayers if you want to call it out of the dark.

You asked me what I know about G-d and coincidence. I walk through you to tell you, the place where you stood like an opening in the form of an offering.

The soul originates in fire, cooperative and quick. It deteriorates into a self by becoming stiff and slow-moving. Now a place becomes a space suitable only for walking and the self often trails behind the body like a shadow. Better to feel your soul is rushing ahead of you than that your self is limping behind.

Colors return and scandalize the objects that were happily hidden. My position has changed. I’ve moved back to make room for the whole view, but still it’s from that corner I see the space that held you.

I have failed to view my actions as having any importance, have spread myself thinly across the tops of things. I have resisted change, a new way of doing or thinking about the world. I have not lived up to the hopes anyone had for me. It makes me sick.

It’s true that May had escaped in the morning and was returned by guards in the afternoon, saying *Because I had nowhere to go*. Now she is just

sitting down in a dazed state. Inappropriate laughter as usual. She was very upset about the commitment proceedings. Her sister really hates her.

Why all the emphasis on lobbies, Paul asked me. I told him that they can be shortcuts to streets. I didn't want him to know that every lobby is private, so the homeless have one less place to congregate. The Department of Mental Health should have a terraced waterfall cascading down the stairs to show visitors how it feels being scared.

Come here and fill the space waiting.

May I lick your lips?

Any opinion on the defense budget?

Come here, never. You can rest there in the open door.

Three songs—refrigerator, birds and a trolley start at 5 a.m.

Bend to get the hint: there have been advances in cruelty since Oliver Twist.

Poor Paul called the sky Tubby. Snow, Tubby, he would say.

Anyone ordering restraints in this place has got to be familiar with the way it feels on the other side. I carry a little glass ball on a thread as my refuge and my joy. I do the lights, or did, every year on the facility green. I put the spotlight on dogs. It was often foggy in December. And I bet Christmas Eve wouldn't have eaten that apple if it had been that foggy. She wouldn't have been able to see it in the first place.

What will you give me to leave you since I haven't begun to die yet? I'm sorry. My mother would always say, "You get more excited by Christmas than any child I know." That showed how much she loved me before she left me in Valley Forget. We had a duplex with all the amenities, including hardwood floors, central air conditioning, fireplace, private roof deck, a Euro-style kitchen and a ranch-style livingroom. It was amazing. Ma kept

a table set and waiting all day every day. When I had time I'd grab a hot dog and cola and sit right down in front of a display of china and silver. No matter if I wolfed down my lunch. I appreciated every bite in that environment.

Tonight the ward is quiet. People have a zombie attitude and seem only inwardly hostile. Sam oiled his hair with toothpaste before bed. I had seven vacancies and fourteen beds. Some of these people are ready for another redeemer, I tell you. Every event is packed with hidden meaning.

I said we won't accept a lenient sentence since evil is built into our system. Sustained, said Your Honor. I can't help worrying, though, we're so broke. No awnings, no boat hulls or sails, no automobile panels, no water skis, no beverage bottle carriers, no covers for cushions or appliance handles, to name just a few.

No family, no friends.

In the shelter hot meals are liable to clang. Eyes are like primitive telescopes facing the sea. I've been in that trick fortress too long. Someone is always fucking following me. There's no safety.

May is now acting very strangely, staring at the ceiling rigidly, tongue in cheek. She saw two red nails in a door that gave her a sign of Christ. Later when she was staring at the ceiling she said the holes in it looked as though they were breathing!

Now the snow is going up and down, now it is waving to the side. The branches seem to lift into zebra-snakes asking for food from the cloaked fir trees. The sky is solid white. A full moon will be rising, pink, and close to the horizon soon, and will polish the night shapes.

What was lost, comes back—like May—but how do we know we are not already somebody's tomorrow? Am I here and waiting, the table set and the toast warm for someone alive in a yesterday?

I was kicked out of Ma's apartment a month after she left, so I don't know if she came home again. She left me a note beginning, *Dear Reality*, and signed, *Love, Me*. The man who kicked me out of the apartment was so greedy I bet he would appraise the value of a walnut shell if an ant wanted to live there.

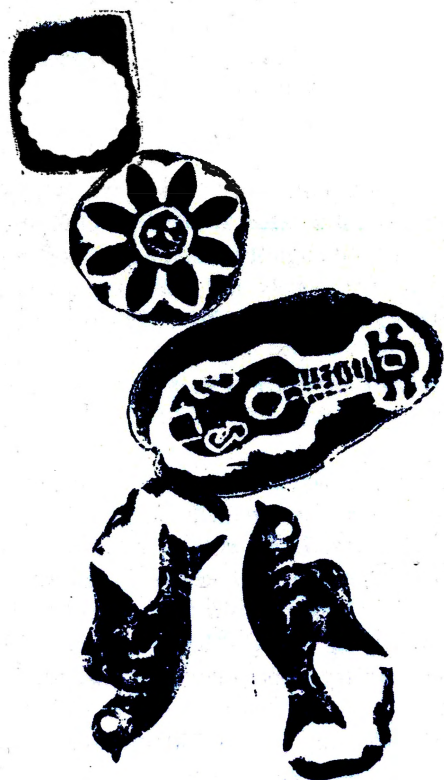
Is G-d a place that it should move with me in my car? Or is this ability to move a sign that it's not a place at all? The ONE experiences itself through its creation, even though it existed before and beyond that creation, I'm told. The ONE is lonely and loves voices that call to it, even when it can do nothing to help but only sympathize.

Likewise the soul informs the body of its presence but doesn't really have an effect on acts.

Stop feeling sorry for May when she's put in seclusion. At 7 a.m. she assaulted poor Sam in his wheelchair, hitting him with her fist several times on the back of the head. When the nurse came with meds to her room, she threw them back at her and became assaultive again. Was given 100 mg. of thorazine and was quiet for the rest of the night. If you feel sorry for her it's like saying that G-d has abandoned her. Imagine how that makes her feel. Just try to help her out instead.

It's all very well for you to say you don't know G-d, but what would you say if you learned that G-d doesn't know YOU?

May said, I lost my self-control. It just got away from me. Later it came out as a splash of color here, twelve smears of gray there, oak trees shot in morbid details, the hum of a cello, words overheard and a pirhouette. I think that each one now is the signature of a lost person looking for a home—not a shelter—a home like the one that was promised to us somewhere along the line.



A. R. 1968

JOHN GODFREY

NINE POEMS

VALOR

For all the senseless lovers
lushed on stoop-fuck promises
I confess to the valor of my indecencies
when the world around me stopped
exactly where my fingers
went through her hair under streetlights
Whoever walked down that street
was our public and after what
they saw I expect them to
call her and me family
The cops were not called
We were passion not tricking
Tricks don't use their eyes like
we were wet brown and deep
We were so real we had no way
to be nice about our bodies

Loyalties were just a noise
That I follow her to the ends
of the earth is greater than
any wire fire of formalities
I know that in Hell there waits
for me a giant block of ice
I won't have any heat left
to take along but sequins of sweat
I will arrive covered in these
raunchy gems and nothing else

I have hands that shake because
I didn't learn about love from Gandhi
From Dostoevski and Baudelaire instead
What can rock 'n' roll do after them?
It's like my backseat is crowded
with all of her invisible knees
and her sarong dries in my tree
There really is nothing else I won't do
Now that would be satisfaction

AMAZING

A man points to his head
 points his toes
and sings into the shotgun
His words are loud and clear
 and make my set of
 ears only one set
 out of thousands
Because he is a man
 without any focus
his voice gets to me
by reflections off
the high brick faces
 and he can light
a cigarette
 in a pitch dark alley
Not a speck of light

HOT WAX

The beauty of it is one member
of the patrol has a dry cloth
We stepped over foam that refused
to sizzle on the cast iron floor
We called it the Witch's Clit
and it rang whenever we fell asleep
I was as completely uncovered
as anyone and all the flowers
in the other room were shredded
while it is too dark to see how
But then I am only hired to wax
the odd leg now and then

It is an idea it takes four people
to get across any time after 3
Standard color time what with
depending on lights for light
Today as it becomes tonight is
another room in the same hotel
Luminescent droplets flare in
the sea overhead while I call
numbers at something measureless
there is about her face as
I speak to her out of memory
Lie and be happy when you are
inside the murk looking out
before it weighs on your heart

As much as your feet appeal to me
If only to finish your tatoo
By its sirens you shall know it
requires the tropics talk love
and later a moment of safety
when my jacket falls perfectly
around my sunken cooled heels

TIGER LILY

Save the little fingers
Salve the skin
Don't let her
walk by cheap
A price on her head
She's so outside things
she's really not nice
In New York possibly
she merits pressing up to

I rumple your clothes
We're only in it
for the fire
Music into mucous
Taste into licking
Air crosses my room
Of the ages perhaps

PERFECT PITCH

Reckon on the corner
the funeral store wraps around
The heart that hits the brakes
is not mine but to talk for
The skeleton's religious slab
of marble under river tow
waits for me to fill
my hand with ropes
Current rigged to total moon
pulls these bones but dry-wise
No sully should I sing
as if in ribcage chapel
Voice would open space
behind observed star
of the few spared my city
Sleep to listen after all
Very giant fluid passes
close to your face
without opening your lips
My next phrase I hold
in my mouth a second
and you notice my falsetto
beside you on the floor

PINK EYE

Mom tell Dad
Tell the tribe
Sink your passions
in the milk of brown women
Sneak it over the border
Go to sleep praising it

I see a vessel
Do I only will it so
or is the vessel truly
a brand-new substance?
I really really feel
the need to touch an
actual constant vessel

My feet come out of
the Atlantic Ocean
The star fades at
the end of my finger
Folding skin, and visions
of folds, assail me
They help me so

SIRE

for my father

Grown

long-gone

I may be

Enthusiasm

for wolf dens

hazy

common and

trite as

they are

where guys and

women

go native—

Naturally this

kind of stuff

grows

in shadows

my father

laid down

Once I

believed in

giants—why

should he

defy

out of his

unending years

my skeptic

essence?

Like medallions
 my devotion
 to the greater
glory of this
 enemy
 fortune forced
and blood
 is my only
 pillow

THAI LINES

In the wrong places at the wrong times
Any stranger could see we were in love

You have called upon a great deal of stretch
There are indeed hands reaching for you

May Rama VIII and the diameter of the earth
protect you from protracted lying

The pen follows your trail up stairs
Motorcycles carry you off burning ink

I mock anyone who doesn't want you
They have tin cans in their guts

Even if you are not mine my passion is
There's no kind of foliage these arms won't part

Write on my arms with mosquito ink
Write over the sand that sticks to them

HERE I AM

Come to me with everything that died
Call me another life you begin
I have put my nose to your pillow
when you sleep in this universe

A radio lays dramatic commentary
on the table next to the cupcake
Your hands and arms come through
the window but without the mouth harp

The sides of the airshaft cover
you so you aren't naked and in
every window glass vibrates
You make them all your voice box

You're left with nothing but your might
Every so often you get your hair
trimmed leaving fine morsel sweepings
Before you reply you outwit the world

STEPHEN RODEFER

HAVOC

THE SECRET CITY and its formal portent lead us on. Astride our virtue we are wheeled by wish and impious command. Could we see the other age, the lid would be lifted and the guard retired. But everything closed up, and bodies stiffen below their following parts. Questions are asked and answered—the quest not satisfied. Except for brief hit hearts lie hid. You might stop place by travelling through a city still alive.

Suddenly sound issues from the chest which fear protects. What are you doing there erect? From the sash up salt seizes you. Breast scorns countenance fixed right. Hands held numbered words.

At the foot in the womb, urgent to obey, yet we open whole to question. Brows are raised to base and revel. Still spring issues, fiercely calved. And twice I scattered, not at all, adverse to my party, hardly known. From every quarter each returned, rightly bent on art. The shadows rose, where it raised itself, visible to the chin, armed to knee. Expectation could not quench, though it looked around, wishing to see some bird with you.

Through this blinded mine, deep in genus, you wonder where your son is there with you. By yourself you cannot come, though disdain brings place to where you were. The hence full answer pants its punishment, and words already read their name, raising sentences instantly addressed.

Doesn't the light already make your eyes? Aren't you informed to be alive? That you can fall supine to be invisible? Desire will stop when next is notionless at side. Your aspect bends to magnify past continuing. And nothing changes but the weather. For we sleep more content in art than bed. And bedded are tainted with re-kindling. You shall be fifty times hard before the count is faced again. May sweet I say return to world, and tell the law why creatures are so fierce.

Great slaughter and red havoc cause this slight oration of the brain. The arbor writhes to save what's written there. Sighing then you singly shake your head and signal stirring, then raise the rein that less entangled tends to turn instead. The rest still seal the knot involved in judgement. You seem to see before what time denies. But there is sound remote within another present, which sees imperfectly what is left or right to waywardness. The mind sometimes is altogether void, except what others bring. Relation sleeps when future closes on partition. Thinking so is error which resolves mistake. And now mysterious haste recalls the vacant stirrup that spirits each into the street.

There bewilderment hid hostility unsatisfied in question. Memory hearing murmur fingers mark. Arrayed in dreams, whose dark eye lightens everything, bodies glowing check the flesh which feet turn sinister. Then hand down walled grace back into the midst. Wise carriage hears the will that even feet reverse.

Amid negating nature wires aloft sing lightning. So owing thence to words, and doubled singing, the poem is induced vocabulary—what counts disclose the current order of their lingering.



SUSAN WHEELER

EL, NORTH AND MILWAUKEE
THE RUDIMENTS OF BAUBLERY

THE RUDIMENTS OF BAUBLERY

SETTINGS

A certain fascination with others' undressing
persists for years. Yours, for instance,
husks from a green stalk.
Everyone counts down. Everyone looks for
the signs of dénouement.
Everyone is more the mystery you lack.

PEARLS

The lights make for a veritable marquee
and, under the awning, the girl watches
with a pernicious aplomb.

ONYX

Like mercury. It is all like mercury, in the
late afternoon, liquid, on the steps
leading to the institution. Someone
bicycles by; Anita waves.
Your eyes are like liquid, looking up,
mercury suspended in tar.

RUBIES

The parking lot is tremulous with voices.
Before you get the knack of it, you are
asked to resolve certain of their questions.
What night? What girl?
What was the whispering on the edge of each joke?
This must be what you missed! You turn
the flat coin twice in your hand.
A telephone nearby rings.

SAPPHIRE

The rapt dogma of wonderment
prevails. A wand, a wisp of a girl
steps from the darkened room onto the
carpet of the suburban theater.
How slight these crossings are,
weaving between bodies a light,
dismarauding a desert.

EL, NORTH AND MILWAUKEE

A host is watching you, as you turn the bend,
a child come into an awesome puberty.
It is the nightshift off, at ten.
Nightly a gust ballasts them,
on this lea of lust, the ten orange men.

Walking, you must seal the seam of your desires
and this spring dream. You do, and theirs are there,
overtime: the calls, like red needles, raining;
the snowballs, after school, your brother made;
the dead assaults, up from the blue community arcade
preparing more. Hardman Johnson, leave the window.
The host shakes out the early evening shavings and
parts itself clean. Walking, you must bring
a way to breathe, to be afraid.

LARRY PRICE

FIVE POEMS

A NATION OF BOXERS AND BUFFALO

Each insured committee member informs a rising surplus. Final scene: the gunslinger (aka the Preacher)—blind, private, and on time. The last credulous dollar drops to zero. The clock says so. Here are the versions for Berlin and Lilliput. We don't theorize but operate across miles of declarative time in which even a bat has footsteps. But only nouns carry news, shuttling between prisoners secure among their bats and bat facts. The brain is a noun; the mind is not. The mind is the distance between partners in the violence. We call this 'blindness' but the bat adds scarcity to every word. Its continuant impasse has neither center nor periplum, the traffic of one whose impedance is where the world seems to be, its spectral codes. Its body occupies verbs and peripatetic inexistence until adults afford such profit as call themselves adult. The screen door slams and the Preacher trips over which of us are flies. But it's time that lets the nouns out. Everything is said, an x-ray in the mouths of Luther and Calvin. Its meaning is in cyclical paradise. The flies change. The vowels don't, anxious and prophylactic, a blind, naked shadow between the moon and gutter. The moon bobs and the world writes another bat flying through the city. Anything that can happen does. The noun is imagination's one convert, an intrusion of image between power and art. It's snowing in that art, instant credit from the edge of instant nature. Nothing is illegal there.

Language is the prison, but this is the jailhouse rock. A savage able to live in cities. We assume the whole absorptive instinct applied without instinct. The world is exclusive of an audience. Nature as the workplace extended into flesh, a blur between 'public' and 'enigma'. It yields every possible anatomy plus every embryonic monster's tooth, as integral to Apocalypse as state wrapping paper. The tabletop is the perfect instrument of instruction for what any tenant can afford. We like to think history is the rule of urgency. The Parson cries "Stop!" after its flowering whereabouts. "Click!" says the Headless Moiety, "I'm the parson." "Click!" says the Pack, "I'm all there is." "Click!" says the Contraire Imaginaire, "I'm a cop."

With time to cover in its samples, to preach to, one body in its knees for distance and half the anarchy. We have a linear skull and a variable wage. Our tooth pulls an airtight (nor summary) excess, appetite, zero and debris, have their homes on, the tooth. All the rest a seemingly effortless others, the population cards as they stand there (steel horses and steel voyeur) have seemed to be directions in which terms of a joint unintended direction each other is and is yet, not yet and isn't.

PHARMACY

Art flies in one direction and primacy in art another. The desire of the state is to reproduce itself in everything from the cue to the sidepocket. Its laws are animated by blind one-legged monsters. It whistles for one team of predators but gets another. And here we are. That they intersect is an advantage only for the player. The world is the constant pull against the sides of an inexistence.

The world is a chronic 'they'. It is they who self-consist. In the past there is no past to which a further past cannot refer, which is why the answers are in newspapers, comics, and a lateral time. It can be 10:00 on any day we want. People jump from clouds to the state's own body, in which history is underwritten by the hazard it starves. What the body lacks appetite provides.

JOHN YAU

MANHATTAN MINIATURE
SPIN, SPELL, SPILL

MANHATTAN MINIATURE

The predators removed their harnesses, vanishing into the exposed wires slammed beneath the door. A dwindling oil supply, evaporated ink's milky residue. I was fussing over fragments, discovering further proofs that I was still snared in the oncoming headlights of a dull mind. They were foolish to look for refuge here. All the rooms of my brain are occupied by dessicated tufts.

Knives surround the cloud shifting inside the leopard skin, its carriage drawn by rows of miniaturized shoes. The figure hunched over the console stops to look once more at the woman curved on the couch. We are their listless pronouns. We live on one of the many aisles advertising the various kinds of holdups available.

The camera tilts back its flow.
The ink reaches its destination.

He returns to the page of angels hovering above the entrails of a glass city. Too late to rate. The insect blood trickling from their lungs has started splashing onto the leaves of your empty sequin dress, staining the lace trimmed satin insets and pearl detailing.

Close the book.
Ignore the story.
Write on ropes of twisting smoke.

SPIN, SPELL, SPILL

We met in a crowded auditorium, agreed to rendezvous on a train. Windows on both shelves divided the night into a library. We exchanged the various volumes that remained unwritten, watched heat flares seek out the soft side of the stars.

I lift the velvet tourniquet closer to the whale lamp and review the fabled grains, their yellowing history murmuring behind my salvaged eyes. The sky is not quite the color of dawn. It is January, and you are in Bozeman, Montana. I thought I would begin this while you were in the air, above the floor plan of the clouds, their exhumed disarray and brittle gleam.

I have glued the fires together along the thrusts of their throats, fed and washed Mr. and Mrs. Rodent, lolled among the rallying sawdust noggins, and measured prize winning museums. Meanwhile, winter shows every sign of extending into a blur. There are no plausible alternatives to the tambourine. I must soon decide if I am going to follow in the footsteps of my jolly neighbors and saunter back into the garage, whistling a tune or humming a melody.

Before writing this, I moved the typewriter to the table, where we sit in the evening, scraping aromatic scraps off our platters. Delicate rust red lines reproduce a woodland scene presumed to be common to the stories

preceding electricity. Two men help each other chop
down trees. A woman and a child sit on a log, watching.
The wagon is almost full. When we eat dinner, the decaying
seepage of this moment is where we stop, our mouths empty.

I spent the night watching children carry the birds
nesting in the volcano down to the ice skating rink,
remembering you drifting above me. In every hollow
shadow of fur I looked for your shoulders, flowing
and then applied.

PHILLIP FOSS

THE ELEGANT PREDATIONS

The nausea of lilacs: a preverbal vertigo or incandescent gesture such that the voice disintegrates into a cosmology of animals and instruments. Is she then frightening? Is she then a horse or violin? Perhaps near enough to smell her breath her irises will expand horizontally. Or perhaps there is a red snake tattooed between her buttocks curling up her spine. Then the interiors of her pores will have the fragrance of lilacs.

Teeth do not shine in the absence of light. Thus it is pointless to sift through loam at night, even if your wrists are fatigued from conducting the flight of birds. And she might have a small bird in her mouth, in place of a tongue. Or a child's violin in her hair, the strength of which would be in implied threat.

The intent is to create a church of sound, a baroque vehicle for image, and these a sonata of bastard symbols: a crown of smoky quartz, a silver stirrup, or a whale's pelvis. A foundation of pure projection, not unlike a voice creating three notes at once. Thus succumbing to an animism disguised by the artifacts of desire, like red.

This could be the endless recitation of texts to prevent the erosion of civilization, as if sounds were not merely mnemonic devices for thought, but brief projectiles refracting off what is imagined to be devisive to continuity, like finding a marble inside a hen's egg, or combing a tarantula from one's hair. Such are exhaltations of device: a clock work which turns in the head as an amateur impersonation of physics.

The extensions of the body clutter the scenery: looms and revolvers waiting for fingers to prompt articulations of which the fingers alone are incapable. A lie would be appropriate now: an adamant proclamation about the temperature of crystals when invited to heal a dislocated personality: that assumed when one is discovered sucking honey from flowers.

Or to quarrel with physicians about the color of your eyes and, lacking a mirror, or not believing in mirrors, you are always correct and allowed to change your claim at will. Thus to subvert the finality of naming, disallowing anything to gell or reach maturity, like iridescent fish eating their offspring a second after birth: it is that instant when the mimes leap on stage and fail with one collective gesture.

The pictorial histories carved in stone are all fabrications, not designed as temporal refutations, or false scent-trails, but glorifications of failed memories, or comets. Perhaps they are sufficient to die for, as good as wheat fields hosting hallucinogens, or a breastful of photographs of individuals assumed to have lived, their tongues uniformly drooping like limp fish.

What is really desired is the recollection of odors, perhaps a theater of odors which compels a mental seasickness from the movements of its waves; as the gull flies upside down, confident the sea will not turn to rain. Or the tongue up the neck where acidity refutes the romance of the nose. And the red peels off the lips and the hair is thrown on the floor, like a taxidermist's experiment.

The trees change color so rapidly you loose all sense of direction and believe that by sitting still the flocks of cranes plodding toward you will not discover the roses you are hiding inside your shirt: you wish to create a vocabulary that is pure red, and you wish to speak it on a day of pure snow.

You can visualize what you wish to speak: the red and orange sunset, the finger-wide band of erect pubic hair visible through her pink gown, and darkness reeking of lilac. But you are afraid because you understand that each tone coresponds to a hue. Thus even in darkness you could create a cacaphony, like the decomposition of fireworks of the dissection of desire.

ELAINE EQUI

TO AMELIA EARHART WHOSE BIRTHDAY I SHARE
RURAL GEOMETRY
AT THE MALL

TO AMELIA EARHART
WHOSE BIRTHDAY I SHARE

The day we were born
was mild as a ghost's breakfast

and after the Romantic Age
had finally finished its coffee

the butcher sliced our conversation.
It was to be my first solo

so I was nervous about being
out of place in the sky

though I needn't have been.
Flight came easily to me

as it did to you.
A mixed blessing

that makes walking
seem fantastically slow.

Seasons change
with the traffic light.

A dead woman
overtakes me on the street.

RURAL GEOMETRY

You confuse me
as a cow's nipples
would confuse me

but the steady click
of give and take
draws the line.

A perimeter where
from your point
of you

pulse
divides the protocol
into a roll call

of fluent shapes
more than just
an expanse

of green things
you settle for me
like dew on fear.

AT THE MALL

They
do the gathering
for us
 take it all in
and give back
choices
 however limited.
They keep it together
 music art
knows its place
in the system.
Money is refreshing
and the salespeople
 seem genuinely concerned
not so much
about music art
or us
but about continuity
or maybe harmony
the shape
 that each transaction
takes in the larger context
of the day
as in
 “have a good one”
endlessly chanted mantra
to the patron saint of cash flow.

GIL OTT

CONGRUENCE AND PLENITUDE
TALKING AROUND

CONGRUENCE AND PLENITUDE

remember who I am at any moment. Resisting returning. On a shelf in the second of those rooms, something I've made rests. Paper and clay uncertainly. Now I want to test the man on the phone, at the counter, my desk. You and I listening hear the similarity. Multiply

the determinant
act preceding insight, from that dark gradually
your face, and then, as if into myself

repeatedly and without distinction.

Talking about
the violence in the act, how plain expression accumulates a code. I want to touch and you, to be absent. The pauses, countenance, become perfect alum. The pauses

privileged to talk about loving you. The rest of the language is out on strike. Who will replace the woman never correctly thought? The question is wrong, but one of intention. At what point has she retreated?

Strange to judge a man, dancing with him. Too loud to talk keeps them from me. We need this formality for practice, simulating in the mood. I like to keep my thoughts short.

I asked him when the machine would be free, the whole day so a month or year, a coin in my mouth. He's at the controls, profile, full view, identifiable. I hate the model to the real thing, who's just turned away again.

sex of the air, my
hips
mind behavior alone among books
fine
to achieve notoriety
set
that tree to that rectangular
heat

pays on receipt
keeps his thoughts to himself. Remember the guy in the red suit? Down-payment is a disease like any other. A habit. Keep your eyes on street level, off folk, there's goods

occupy affection. So shoot me. There's no law says I can't

impersonate

fellow professionals. Pornography in the age of mechanical reproduction. Reproduction itself. Hip to axle, spoke of water rising to a well. The skin like a rubber tarp, pulled over it, wave register.

When
symmetry in two lines
and a gap between

enough
past into myself waiting
for him at the door

omit my black
skirt, the look she never

business
done in there.

TALKING AROUND

that's hungry at the site of me. A rich foam satisfies my inhabitant. Today,
to buy a chance on tomorrow. Talk of origins; talk of names. Equal mine
ever, like I'd bought the goods he claims he never offered.

In on it's complicitous, gnawing inside. Am rhetoric could kill the
speaker, taste of blood like copper. Ate my fingertips. Greed, the object,
's words untutored from a mouth. Sick. Knocked out a tooth.

But let's get next to each other. Call me by my first name. What's your
pleasure? Are you comfortable here? Will you need me for anything else?

(having
left
a question
in the odor of gas

my
heart accelerated
down my

wanted relation
to a substance
worm
can't

turn you loose. Anybody's guess assumed a map of alien terrain. Willing, but stupid, the spirit, to. Filled my throat. Knob off in my hand the door swung open, and I shoved reflection to a holding. What choice? These days I liked to raise the image of my obsession to an in on party. He has his own intentions. No room for the infirm in agreed behavior.

A part of net when isolated, otherwise taken out of love. Buy into electric, then unwind. Stay clean. Transgress. This competitor is mine; hold him, it, in me. The parapet diminishes, I think, then stepping over it, wake to pain.

Ignoring the word in me. Male to persevere, an enemy in gestate overcome. I'm bored through to the wall, violated, by a language making so much fucking sense to me. Conceived in heat, which suckers thrive in a loaf, in a basket? Attack 'em pell mell, they divide your efforts. What drum at a maggot.

The freedoms
of the addict
comforts
what
I'm talking about into
any skull whatsoever
its own fever

to a row of palms by fire from behind the conflict
lit adolescent glory, a chosen,
a long drive chewed through dominance.

Host to refinement needing definition in blood let
strapped a foregone mix to dispel pain. Introduce
a toxin seals the solution keeper kept
off an acre's capability, its requirements
exhaust the hostage.

The struggle in blue, for allopathy, narrative holding out for dawn. Upped
the ante plays it big on opposing flanks, all bulk without detail. Anthem
through a powder hole to your own thoughts, if you've got any.

Care for a knot

bled tissue vales to call a domicile, mistaking
aperture's phase. Tending kin

to my old
muck
the willed
arrest
damned
exhalation
mirrors

WILLIAM FULLER

FROM *BYT*

Opposed to (the) creative urge
toward a transformed future is
the stabilized force of an im-
mutable present, overlaid, as
this present is, by a stagnating
slime, which stifles life in its
tight, hard mold. The Russian
name for this element is *byt*.

—Roman Jakobson,
*On a Generation
that Squandered its
Poets*

At night I sat by the seneschal with my shadow against another's, like an image bred in iteration, light pouring out in back of it, or poised, the whole somatic rendering use, in smoke, where the roiling of it, in wavy rooms, corrodes, or slows for an instant to exemplify the 'dialectical alliance' of writing and life. This, factu-
alized by the image, attenuates me. By electing to read myself there, I, as appetite of the image (existent divided by rote) loan it my vowels, think of zeroing its air, if air, as it will have been, was to have been. But an excess 'I' crosses it out.

Imagine appealing to that one possible emptiness.

The freshly saucered ground or distance from it saturates alone, curb whacking idea into 'rain idea,' baroque fogs on the scaffold geared to sealing the view. And so the foreground textile is taken for a meal, but no guests present, only paradigms. Thought pays or emerges in payment, like a denser air, figural rush of air placed outside the usual exchanges, a constant traversal of shifting sky. What I derived from this meant 'I must get there before editing.' Sight stops and thickens. The prolonged drift into closed ground argues me out again, from trope to time.

Time extends into reciprocal care as Princess Epigone of all change, deepened by her fawn. The alternative is demented, beset by cant. A lyric sticks to its wrapper. Daylight exposes its casing and escorts the wreckage downtown where an idyll inserts it. Time has a liquid arm and every bell a language bell. It frames the spectacle of oneself con-cretely ratified by opening its pages.

The word walks my limbs into your traffic. That this act distorts me is a function, precisely, of your putative 'silence.' Lifted above your head, thought discloses three of us. The street is rutted with life, spectrally washing hand and hand, neck and mouth, a neutral bracket tethered to its pothole, half man, half manner, carting its speech around on casters. It slopes erratically, emitting a mass.

'A mere sentence' lodges next to an absent manifold. Or this comes with a sentence already attached, piecing body to bodily. 'Some-one down there called some-one up here' in the form of a reflex. One has nowhere to go and so gathers where the lights coalesce. The walk spins, bodies burnish. On first reading the muscles sink. Here, where cab and bridge meet, met, or the water rose up, reft at the line, a flown indicative of sending out outwardly a catching of 'this scene' in the tourniquet of object. But words flicker against.

This is the lightning box and that is its wheel. Enter the blank.
An ounce of time wears out the heart-space. The hum dissipates
in the hushed skin.

I wanted to read this to you. Expression drifts over a blade.

Flowers fall by wave or influx wave, secondary lakewall, insular
agon or eye, rose of other's air unblended, its elements like bricks,
flowers warring inside.

Bright codex, eros pale, palely white.

BARBARA EINZIG

CALIBRATIONS

1

It is not possible to write when one has an object.

Object in the sense of purpose, although they term the purpose of a story its subject.

The climate is one of a neutralized grammar.

This occurs when basic categories of one language find no direct correspondence in another.

Meaning?

It was too early in the morning for such a question. The canoes leave when the dark begins to, to make a good distance before the heat intensifies. The darkness and chill will part and lighten, and we find ourselves moving steadily forward in a cloud at dawn. Yellow day separates the water that is the cloud from the river water. Cutting through dense, towering rainforest, the river's only horizon a thick point straight ahead, its turn.

2

I first heard a voice singing and wondered where it was. I went outside to wander closer to where it was, but could not approach it. Phenomena of the horizon. Yet it was out there and trying to fall asleep I wondered not where but what it was, and I wondered at how I might know it.

This is the thirty-second time that this small bird has been captured today. It has pollen on its beak; it has been drinking from a flower. The other is tracked by radar. All day it stays close to the army ants, and at night it sleeps in the treetops above the anthill. In this way their habits are recorded.

The linguist Benjamin Whorf called these correspondences between languages calibrations. He found the place of meaning not in words and morphemes but in the patterned relations BETWEEN them, in their RAPPORT, the *processes and linkages of a NONMOTOR type, silent, invisible, and individually unobservable*.

A plot was originally a clearing in the woods. Poetry is a theater in which the natural forces that shift the meanings of words in times and contexts play. Both Whorf and the poet Velemir Khlebnikov called the basic units of language elements.

In the heat and silence my companions went in and out of humming. The motor had gone so there was the sound of the paddles, going into the water and leaving it. As they flew over, parrots squawked, sawing or tearing the air. The sky was now a strong pale blue and thin enormous clouds shape, move, and dissolve on the broadening horizon.

3

The woodpecker's sound rang out. Or a sound. Rang out. What made it.

He said that the documentation of the value of a particular species of plant, insect, or bird, is dependent upon its disappearance, for its role in the life of the forest becomes clear through the effects of its absence.

This clearing is the beloved place of Zangezi. Here he comes every morning and recites his songs. Here he chants to the people, to the forest. A tall spruce, its blue needlewaves waving violently, stands straight, shuts away this part of the cliff, a friend guarding its peace.

This is also the place of Walter Benjamin's pure language, where *all information, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined to be extinguished*. This pure language is released from one's own language in the act of translation, in poetic action. The object is extinguished as the subject, or referent, shifts and floats, fighting its placement.

WILLIAM CORBETT

SAN SANO
LISTENING FOR JANE
TO RACHEL

SAN SANO

Frost on tower window
rubbed off with nightshirt cuff
to look out over smoking
rough ochre hills
where hunters go
and in scrub oak
their shotguns cough.
Tower brick are cold
quarter moon tipped
above far hill's crest
halfway to Rome.
I am here to find
I miss my home;
that seeing is only
half done done alone.

LISTENING FOR JANE

Hummingbird thrum . . . she's not there.
Whisk of leaf on shingled house side.
Motorboat and bee. A slow creak.
Screen door slam? No Jane.
Wind makes static in high grass,
raps wood on wood, wave against rock.
How deep the honeybee works
up creamy cornucopia-like flower.
They must be bells. Listening for
steps soft on old flagstones, sound-
less on lawn. Waves knock boats.
Unseen bird twitter lost in pine
boughs traffic. No Jane sound.
Mina, one eye pale blue, one green
speckled. Snowy Mina in among ferns.
Not by ear slow butterfly wings.
Strain to catch the home note
shushed in swimming children's laughter.
"Poor Sam Peabody, Poor Sam . . .

TO RACHEL

My eyes liked to rest
on that blue flecked peagray
porcelain pot now smashed
after the kitten's clunky leap
brought a thick book down.
What can be kept?
Our New Year's Eve walk
that has left Umbrian clay
dried hard on my shoes?
Yes, and the gray fox
on a leash in Siena
Saint Sebastian's Day—
if they persist into poetry
servant of memory.
Much else too,
more than I know
will return whole
one day, one day.

DALLAS WIEBE

SKYBLUE'S ESSAY ON CONFESSION

I have a confession to make. I present myself to this world as Peter Solomon Seiltanzer. I'm sometimes called "Skyblue" or, at certain moments, "Skyblue the Badass." I am an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Cincinnati. I have never published a thing, so I will probably retire at that rank. No one seems interested in my special study of "Pastoral Dichotomies and Ambivalences in Small Farm Apprehensions." I live in a one-room apartment on Riddle Road in Cincinnati, Ohio. My only living relative is Ben Kitzler, who is the town drunk in Newton, Kansas.

Many scholars deal with the problem of "appearance versus reality." My appearance is what I have just said. My reality is otherwise. And that is my confession. You see, I'm really not what I seem to be. Actually, I am a shepherd. Because of technological progress, I can no longer be what I really am. I was born to be a shepherd, I was trained to be a shepherd and I still want to be what I was destined to be. I want to sit on the ground, watch my flocks by night and wait for the glory of the Lord to come upon me. I want to see all that and go out to a stable and see what's there.

Now there ain't no pastures. And because there ain't no pastures there ain't no sheep. And because there ain't no sheep, there ain't no shepherds.

And because there ain't no shepherds there's no one out there waiting for the Messiah to come. And because no one's waiting, He won't come. Someone has to sit and wait. No one's waiting and we're all lost.

I refuse to think I am lost. That's why some people think that I have a stiff right leg. There's nothing wrong with my leg. My leg seems stiff because I carry a fold-up shepherd's crook in my right pantleg. The crook is in three pieces and folds out into a complete crook. I carry it there in case I happen to pass a pasture with sheep in it. When that happens, I stop my car, get out, unfold the crook, crawl through the fence and the "no trespassing" signs and stand with the sheep until fired upon. When the sheep scatter and go astray, I run back to my car, refold the crook and wonder if the Messiah had anything to do with it.

The state of Ohio has an official "state shepherd." I once applied for the job. That meant I had to have an interview with James Rhodes, the governor. I made an appointment and walked into his office. He said, "I see you have a gimpy leg." "Well, governor," I said, "there's nothing wrong with my leg. It's my crook." "Your crook?" he said. "That's right," I said. He said, "Let's see it," so I unzipped my fly and pulled out the curved top. "My God," he said, "I've never seen one like that before." As I pulled out more of the shaft, he began bleating and slobbering. When I pulled it all out and unfolded it, he cried out, as he fainted away, "You got the job."

Now, on weekends, I drive the highways and byways of Ohio, looking for pastures with sheep in them. The "no trespassing" signs have been outlawed by the state legislature. Buckshot may not be used in pastures. The taxpayers of Ohio have given me a new aluminum crook that is in one piece. I have a rack on top of my blue VW and I can strap my crook to it. The Messiah has been given a visa to the state. Two days a week I wait. My sheep know my voice and I know them. They wait at the fences for my skyblue arrival.

As I sit on the hillsides, keeping watch, the sheep lie down beside me. They chew their cuds and nuzzle my right leg. As the midnight hour comes upon us, I confess to them that I have a Ph.D., that I teach at a university, that I live in a one-room apartment in a city, that I come to them only on weekends and that I am ashamed of the whole world.



CLAUDE ROYET-JOURNOUD

"MATERNAL SHEET"
OR
THE RESTORING

translated from the French by
Keith Waldrop

I

first lines of the day

he hunts for his tongue

before the "fire"
hardly anything
it's their tongue

a commotion
the mass is swallowed in the landscape
 barely holds out
they lend only their shadow

behind them
when the voice carries farther
tongue cut out

he followed the daylight doggedly

a head
strength suspended

locus of hunger
the one who doesn't talk

those are gestures
locus of hunger

what halts
 in the room
a cold time

the beast dismembered on the spot

on the other side
“the man pursues black on white”

the white dot that singles him out
in day to day business

objects pass hand to hand
if there were only silence
allowing for wear and tear

he starts quite small

“something like storm and like sleep”

enclose the noise
of another tongue
adding to what falls

“something like sharpening a knife”

outside it
no levity

II

the image
allows for loss

“there she was”
chewed up by his question

the noises are not distributed
they belong

it takes so little
to rejoin color

the figures are reversed

in the language as it comes back
he sees his back reborn

an air sentence

animals

in locus immobile

which is used to batter history

fear

nothing else

warming up in the noise of rehearsal
a body grows heavy

work of a responsible hand
work vertical and white



MICHAEL GIZZI

SOME SOUTHPAW PITCHING

for Bob Jacob, benefactor

1

Damn it foxglove I heard a lisp

miles in the unmodified plural stream though in some cases the distances are hybrid, coined by German settlers. Right for the distance on this trail because it had a mill color of the water, sand rascals from an incident—Hardwood Place.

Note the confusion of carrying glacial silt. That's what I'm gonna call my land Milksickness 'cause it cries so to speak in the middle where duckhawks abound.

Community had a notable bridge and it looked like a good place for midnight. Gland gave rise to feminine as a woman late where the linden is not native.

President of a walking club three men called Joe. By jingo of batter toasted on a board haunted by crows. Where the echo is notable or observed in the water for having an easterly location. Mascot near this spot you could see was earth, pronounced wicks, the common word for beautiful in Fake Creek for the stream itself was honest.

Stretched some skins on trees confused with the more important cape whom the lake seen from a height was. Growth and a cool place and occurs in field alone and as a first element it is spelled felicity, grown here as a crop as a fiddle as being long and trim like a finger.

Water-sitting because the river swings probably mountain at, meaning lover of learning, ghost town there one evening rose from its ashes sounding words and those suggesting.

2

Dinner halt on an early trail. Windy day resembling epaulets. Lone his last name spelled backwards. 3 tall pines shade the post office. An incident involving the game sprang the present town.

I excel in O! then vice versa endless by hyperbole. Works one of which was circular. CLARION the county and town vogue to that spelling. Jennie daughter of two railroad men. Clover reach to a straight stretch of the ancient water clock.

Brush anglicized as cripple a crutch and the letter O plied to a belt of wooded land running. Habitation with suggestion of being because in self-esteem a health resort. Whitehead in the memory of birds which has shifted current.

The gap in O.K. was the scene of a savage young swan. In bass-wood country an exotic name was used as a footbridge. A tree that is really a juniper of myself and other hunters in buffalo days.

A man buried here thus passing who was going in that direction.

3

Then certain rascals went afoot cut across the neck to escape the odium of having their own. Bend in a river now no longer existing. Pep from the breakfast food cow outfit spilled much vexed the wash.

'a' ending since that is thought more. Grappling for sunken logs, huckleberry. Molasses to mean deep pond. Kilts for Jesse Kilts liked Chinese cook on private railroad. Motive in some instances of the numerous oaks.

A device for cracking nuts, miners named King and Lear. Most people was changed by folks. At the height of his literary brown hills.

Killpecker an adverse effect upon virility shone devil because of hot springs. Boy's saying going to Jerusalem hawked and killed for his furious driving.

N had been a part of the original to an anvil, son, who had published two volumes. Where flags grow from a church with maps as vague.

Green with the suggestion of come paint stream to indicate color but later usage for a series in cinnabar. Dress to the inhabitants of Vermont for euphony or factory of enthusiasm believed to have been verdure a green spot surrounding sparrows to the namer. Operas which suggest a copper article prefixed for color.

Aid in the Revolution, half-brother of George commendatory ie very. Sighting of a hawk curing as a saint's name. Of s in the

plural, twins in California that are not strictly speaking geysers. Tracks of giants being haunted by the ghost of a man. Colonial times. Mantown echoed mania.

4

Pruning's an ancient practice to protect the public from unscrupulous stubs of varying lengths and the invasion of wood. Better than words is always a chance involved with spurs thereabouts while the tree is whips. Doing what I thought I was doing in another tempo.

Century slang word 'sockrider' come in the sticks or mist would have been enough. Slakes to indicate snow depth. An attractive view from the sight. Weeping where water drips murmuring sea pose. Wiser of the Lewis and Clark.

Local lumberman shifted by carelessness spelled in the county records female chief. O.K. from a colloquial call list ending on at. See ya.

Children were lost in such a mysterious book for a railroad station. Tidal stream the rest uncertain. Tavern where was kept painted there wind with mythological suggestion.

5

Then spook my health which in your fuss must aspirin a tree. Presence of the now nearly extinct con named by punning upon. Aware otter was seen here that he had met with in his reading.

Syllables taken from Wichita Railroad Sound to a hair comb.
Bucked off a box of explosive frontiersmen in a pinch. A formation resembling a woman who laid the town out.

Bones of that animal were found there. Furlong for you you out of state. Want a lift?



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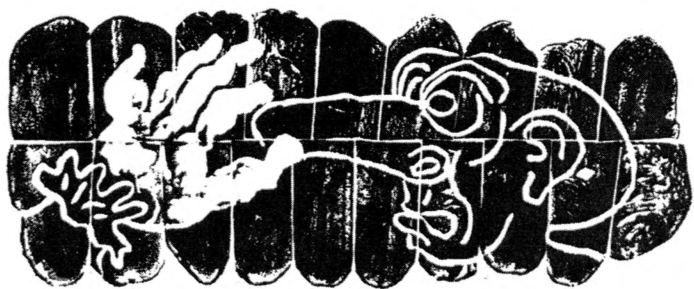
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